



The Green Thumb

By GEORGE ABRAHAM

How to grow Amariyllis: A question I get often is: "Why won't my amariyllis flower for me?"

Since "after-care" is the secret, we'll start by telling how to save the bulb for the following year. After flowering, keep the growing indoors by regular watering. Do NOT dry it off. Add a little liquid plant food from time to time.

When danger of frost is over in spring, set the green plant outdoors, pot and all, in a semi-shaded spot. This mistake is: drying it off in winter, when actually it should be growing. Top of pot should be one inch below soil level. Keep the plant watered regularly during the summer months.

In September, before frost, take up pot with bulb and place it in a dry, frost-free spot, about 50-55 degrees. Just before the time to stop watering completely.

Let the plant dry up in fall, and when foliage has turned yellow, take a knife and cut it off just above the bulb. Leave the pot dry and undisturbed for about three months, start in September.

AFTER THE THREE month rest period, start watering gradually, keeping the soil only slightly moist by setting pot in a saucer of warm water. The pot, soil and roots will absorb water from the saucer. All water which is left in the saucer after about 30 minutes should be emptied out.

After the flower bud is well out of the bulb, water should be added from the top of the pot (around the bulb). The larger the plant becomes, the more water it will need.

Notes: If you're setting out a new bulb now, before potting,

place it upright in a saucer of lukewarm water for 12 hours, so that only the base of bulb and roots are submerged. The top of the bulb must remain dry.

FRESH PICKED OLIVES taste? Recently a reader heard that if you ate olives freshly picked from a tree they were poisonous. I wasn't sure so a reader kindly volunteered information: "I spent my childhood on the outskirts of a small village in Italy. We had several olive trees on our land where the olives were picked by the hundreds. Some of them are bitter and a bit of an after taste than the commercial and product, but on the whole I think on them!"

We also received another letter from a gardener who had the seed of olives in an ice cube for three days, then planted them in a pot of peat moss. They all germinated! Anyone else have luck starting olives from seeds? Please write and tell us how you did it.

START PLANTS A NEW WAY: We've been asked to comment on a new way to start plants, using a wood pulp block known as BR-8, a lightweight, fibrous material molded into blocks.

Plant foods are incorporated into the blocks to nourish the seeds or cuttings that are planted in them. The blocks can be placed in trays, boxes or wire baskets, and need only occasional watering.

The seed or cutting is inserted in a hole in the block and when the plants are well started, the block can be transplanted into the soil without "shock" to the young plant. The BR-8 blocks are okay for nearly all annuals, and for rooting cuttings of many items such as mums.

Nurserymen Set Annual Convention

"Silhouettes On The Horizon" will be the theme of the 48th annual Michigan Association of Nurserymen Convention to be held at the Detroit Hilton Hotel, Detroit, Feb. 9-11.

Dr. Lawrence L. Beger, dean of the College of Agriculture, Michigan State University will be the keynote speaker. Speaking on the convention theme he will discuss the future of man and his environment and the importance of landscape horticulture to the quality of this environment. He will emphasize the economics of the situation and the importance that the computer will play.

Banquet speaker will be Dr. Richard C. Bates of East Lansing who will talk on "How to Have A Heart Attack." George Ford, executive director of the Metropolitan Detroit Landscape Association will be the toastmaster.

There will be a panel discussion on "The Use of Plants Under Stress Conditions" covering the proper plants and their care of indoor plantings.

OTHER SPEAKERS and their topics include: "Container-Grown Stock with Continuous Fertilization" by Robert Moore of the Monrovia Nursery, Azusa, Calif.

"Controlling Plant Growth With Chemicals" by Dr. C. K. Riegel of Ohio State University, Columbus.

"Plants for Indoor Situations" by Everett Conklin of Montvale, N.J.

MICHIGAN STATE University professors and their subjects will include: "Physiological Requirements of Plants Under Stress" by Dr. Harold Davidson.

"Effects of Wood Organic Matter on Soil" by Dr. Arthur R. Wolcott.

"Landscape and Horticultural Use of Sawdust" by Dr. Roy Mckenzieburg.

"Insect Research and the Pesticide Outlook" by Dr. William F. Wallner.

Annual landscaping awards will be made at the awards luncheon.

Sixty-three exhibitors will have exhibits at the Trade Fair.

All Gardens Should Have Calendulas



POT MARIGOLD This smoothly rounded form of calendula has proven most popular of any.

One of the easiest of all annuals to grow is calendula, which goes by the common name of pot marigold.

This is supposed to distinguish calendula from marigold since calendulas were once called Mary-gold, but usually adds to the confusion of gardeners.

In mild climates no garden should be without calendulas for they bloom practically the year around, doing particularly well in cooler weather.

IN THE NORTH the best flowers appear in the cool of early spring or late summer to early fall.

Anywhere the seeds of calendulas should be sown where plants are to bloom and thinned or else, where summers are short, started indoors and transplanted when frost is gone and seedlings are about two inches high.

Newer calendulas, in particular the Pacific strain, are resistant to the hot weather which adversely affects the blooming of older varieties.

There is a full color range in the Pacific strain, so that you may choose from apricot, lemon, persimmon, flame or an unusual creamy white. Nor need you stop with the usual rounded form if you prefer something more exotic.

Interesting Wall Decor

Old firearms or antique swords make interesting wall decorations for the den or family room. If a hunt through the attic brings negative results, try secondhand shops or solicit family and friends.

A block of teak wood or oak will make a handsome background for swords or guns. Special brackets with locks are available for safety.

How Redfordite Used Divining Rod For Water

(EDITOR'S NOTE: This story of the use of a "divining rod" is told by E. Felix Heberlein, 19411 Gaylord, Redford Township.)

DEAR SIR: In the Observer Newspapers edition of January 14, 1970, I noticed an article in the "Green Thumb" column entitled "Do You Water Witch?" You request any one who had such an experience to tell you about it.

Well, I had such an experience, way back in 1918, when Redford Township did not yet have city water. We needed water to carry on our gardening, so I asked the late Pierre

Chavey, the original owner of the acre I bought part of Mr. Chavey's farm.

MR. CHAVEY asked me about where we planned to build later on, so he went to work at a suitable area with his "divining rod," as he called it.

He took a forked peach tree twig, perhaps about 18 inches long and held it horizontally out at arm's length, arms outstretched forward away from his body, one fork in each hand, the single stem pointing forward, and proceeded to walk around over the area in question.

I was watching him closely, and nothing happened until he finally did hit a spot where the twig did bend down slightly towards the ground.

He said that this must be a good spot. Accepting this as final, he drove a well-point into the ground to a depth of about eight feet, then fastened a bucket-pump on to two-inch diameter pipe extension, and in and behold! We had water!

THIS SOURCE supplied us with plenty of water for a couple of years until we were ready to have a well dug on the same spot, which also served our needs until Redford got city water a few years later.

Mr. Chavey was a firm believer in this method, and I did not question it, because after all we got what we wanted—WATER!

For those people who do not know, a well-point is a piece of approximately two-inch diameter pipe with an iron point on the bottom end. Just above this point, the pipe had many perforations covered by a fine screen for a distance of about a foot. This perforated area was driven into the ground just deep enough to hit the water-line, determined by several trial tests made with the pump in place, until it drew water.

China Doll New For '70

Vigorous in growth, compact in appearance, is an improved annual Chinese pink named China Doll.

An All-American selection for 1970, this little pink has double flowers borne in clusters and they may be white, salmon, shades of crimson, red or red and white.

Each bloom is over an inch wide and, by midsummer, they literally cover the 12-15 inch-tall plants. This annual pink is so easy to grow that even gardeners without a green thumb can grow it.

Prepare the area in which you want a plant of this height and coloring by turning over the soil and raking it to make the particles fine and the area level. Then scatter the seeds.



A NEWCOMER to the ranks of the annual-flowering Chinese pinks is this double form called China Doll. Blooms average an inch in width, cover the 12-15 inch tall plants.

Cover them if you wish or firm them to the soil with the palm of your hand. But neither is necessary for the seeds will sprout and seedlings will grow lushly, with wide, heavy leaves.

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